

Important Information and Tips For NSF Flat Rate Participants!



This information pertains to participants of proposal review panels, committee of visitors (COV), site visits, and advisory committee meetings.

Federal employees and those persons that are **not a citizen** of the United States or a resident alien (green card holder) who are participating in a proposal review panel, advisory committee, site visits, or COVs are **not entitled** to the flat rate reimbursement.

Federal employees and non-U.S. citizens are reimbursed under the FTR. For local travel, they should submit a SF-1164, *Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business*, for transportation costs (mileage, parking, metro, and taxi). For non-local Federal Government Employees and non-U.S. citizens, a travel order and voucher will be prepared for all travel expenses in accordance with NSF policies and the FTR.

In an effort to make your ticketing and reimbursement process as simple and pleasant as possible, we have put together some information to help guide you through the travel process.



What You Need to Know About Government Travel

- NSF pays for the transportation tickets through its travel agent, CWTsatoTravel (SATO). All travel arrangements must be made through Sato.
- When making your reservation, NSF requires that you supply SatoTravel with the Panel/Meeting ID provided by your point-of-contact. If a Panel/Meeting ID was not provided, please contact your NSF administrative contact person.
- Electronic tickets are issued three days prior to the travel date. You will receive an email confirmation with an attached electronic invoice. The attached invoice may be used for airport entry. *Please note that tickets must be e-tickets unless there is a compelling reason for a paper ticket. An express delivery charge will be added for paper tickets at an additional cost to the program office.*
- **Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) does not allow NSF to pay for interim, unrelated points of travel. SatoTravel will make reservations from any departure location to NSF and then departing to another location (in other words, the travel would be from Point A to point B to Point C). For example, if a panelist from Los Angeles needs to attend a meeting in Chicago after the panel meeting in Washington, they could be authorized travel from Los Angeles to NSF to Chicago. It is then the panelist's responsibility to get back to Los Angeles. Interim, unrelated stops are still not allowed. Please inform your program office administrative contact of any itinerary changes from the home location.**

*****SATO can also make other ticketing arrangements, but you must pay the difference between the government fare and the fare quoted by SATO using your personal credit card. We recommend you call SATO, rather than E-mail to make any alternate arrangements. *****

- Due to government law and regulation, you must fly the government contract carrier. If you have specific questions about this or if special circumstances arise, please speak with your NSF administrative contact person.
- For overseas flights, travelers must use a US airline if available (Fly America Act). Travelers will not be reimbursed for overseas airfare costs if a US airline is not used.
- The Federal Travel Regulation allow for the purchase of non-refundable tickets, sometimes called “super saver fares”. Please contact your program office administrative contact for more info on non -refundable tickets as special internal controls must be adhered to.
- Federal Law requires that all domestic payments/reimbursements be made through electronic funds transfer - a direct deposit into your bank account.
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations require NSF to issue IRS Form 1099, Miscellaneous Income, to participants for federal tax filing purposes when calendar year compensation is \$600 or greater. This form is mailed out at tax time.

Making Travel Reservations

Government regulations require that all travel arrangements must be made through our contracted travel agent, SatoTravel. There are several options for making travel reservations:



Option 1- You can make your reservations on the Web. Go to FastLane at www.fastlane.nsf.gov and click on “Panelist Functions.” “Panelist” refers to proposal review panels, participants of advisory committees, COVs, and site visits. Next, login using your name, panel ID, and password provided by your program office and go to the “Panelist Travel System.” Here you can fill out a reservations worksheet that is transmitted electronically to SatoTravel. Sato will make your reservations and email you your itinerary. *This is the preferred method of making travel reservations.*

Option 2: Email your travel request to SatoTravel at travel@nsf.gov. Please include the following information in your travel request: name, email address, home address, home and work phone numbers, meeting/panel ID, your departure/return location (train station or airport), and the dates and times of preferred travel.



Option 3: Call SatoTravel directly with your request at 1-800-817-5257. Their office hours are 7:30 a.m.- 8:30 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. For emergencies call Sato at 1-800-827-7777. SatoTravel will ask for your meeting or panel ID. This number should be in your invitational letter sent by the program office.

Reimbursements

A flat rate reimbursement, sometimes referred to as a group reimbursement, is the method by which members of proposal review panels, advisory committees, site visits, and COVs are reimbursed. Flat rate reimbursements are based on a fixed predetermined daily fee, which



normally covers any expense related to the meeting (except transportation). Transportation is billed to NSF's centrally-billed travel account by SatoTravel. The amount of flat rate reimbursement is based on whether the day is a *travel day* or a *meeting day* and whether the participant is *local* or *resides outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area*.

For participants who reside outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area, the allowances for flat rate reimbursements are as follows:

- \$480 for each *meeting* day and
- \$280 for each *travel* day

The program office determines the number of meeting days and the number of travel days that will be reimbursed. A maximum of two travel days may be authorized.

For **local participants** -Local travel is defined, regardless of mileage amounts, as travel that is less than 24 hours, does not incur per diem and is only approved for official NSF business such as traveling to training and off site meetings. *Travel that is more than 24 hours and incurs per diem expenses must be reimbursed through NSF's eTravel system. Per diem expenses cannot be claimed for travel occurring within a 35 miles radius of NSF.*

- \$280 for each meeting day for non-government local participants and Real Time Conferencing participants
- Participants attending by videoconference or teleconference will receive \$280 compensation per day for each day of the meeting.

This flat rate reimbursement policy does not apply to travelers employed as Federal government employees or Non-U.S. Citizens. (see page 1).

Use of a Personal Vehicle. If you choose to use a personal vehicle in lieu of an airline or train and if the roundtrip mileage is **over 300 miles**, total reimbursement is limited to the normal cost of the government-contracted airfare. If the roundtrip mileage is **300 miles or less**, NSF will pay all mileage and tolls incurred. Please contact your NSF administrative contact person for current mileage rates. In order to be reimbursed for your privately owned vehicle (POV) expenses, you must complete a POV reimbursement statement. This form should be provided to you at the meeting or you can request one from your NSF administrative contact person.



Please note that rental cars are not authorized or reimbursable. Additionally, local ground transportation (including parking) will not be reimbursed for any participant (including local participants). This is because the costs associated with ground transportation are already included in your flat rate reimbursement.

How to Receive Your Reimbursement

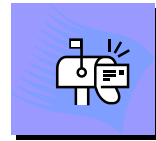
Once the panel or meeting is complete, the program office prepares an NSF Reimbursement Form. The office sponsoring the meeting completes the reimbursement form normally within 10 days of the meeting. The reimbursement is directly deposited into your bank account approximately 5 days after Finance receives the approved reimbursement form.

- If you drove your own car you will need to provide additional documentation or your reimbursement will be delayed. For personal vehicle, submit a POV Reimbursement Statement.

For all participants, going into FastLane at www.fastlane.nsf.gov is the best and easiest way to provide banking information to NSF. To get started, go into FastLane and click on "Panelist Functions". Now login and go to the Panelist Banking System and enter in the required information. The information in FastLane is transferred nightly to NSF's accounting system and is a faster and safer alternative to submitting paper forms. This can even be done at the meeting site. **REMEMBER:** *"Panelist" refers to participants of proposal review panels, advisory committees, COVs, and site visits.*



Foreign travelers/Non U.S. Citizens receive reimbursement via a paper check mailed by the US Treasury. Currently, the Federal government cannot process international electronic transactions. However, if a non-U.S. Citizen has a U.S. Bank, then reimbursement will take place via the electronic funds transfer. The NSF Faststart Direct Deposit Form is used to record the address that checks should be mailed. The first section should be completed and please include your email address. A form can be obtained from your program office and sent by email.



These tips are designed to provide guidance and to make your travel and reimbursement process as simple as possible. We are looking forward to your visit to NSF and hope you enjoy your stay.